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Use of radiactively contaminated material in building construction from uranium mines in Gabon and Niger

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CONSTRUCTION DE LOGEMENTS D'HABITATION AVEC DES RÉSIDUS D'URANIUM D'EXPLOITATION AU GABON ET AU NIGER



French state owned corporation Areva operates in both countries. Aspects the study took into consideration:

1. Health impacts on workers and civilians from uranium mines;
2. detailed assessment of uranium mining practices and utilization of contaminated construction materials;
3. overview of international standards and guidelines for sound mining practices.



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Conducted field mission to Gabon, Mounana, 600 km South-East of Libreville (capital)





Gabon, major findings

- No contaminated construction material has been utilized;
- Yet, as the distance to the mine shafts, processing factory and waste dumps are only 500 to 600 meters, likelihood of contamination is high.
- Radio activity is measured daily by Areva but records are inaccessible.
- Gabon is signatory candidate of EITI.



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New explorations by Areva in full swing





Village lake used as waste dump





Remnants of processing facility to crush uranium ore and production of yellow cake





Desk study for Niger for security reasons. Results include:

- ▶ Contaminated construction materials have been sold on local markets;
- ▶ Groundwater radioactive and contaminated dust accumulates everywhere;
- ▶ No workers protection and compensation for occupational illnesses;
- ▶ Third Uranium mine is expected to commence operations in 2013;
- ▶ Niger also a signatory candidate to EITI.



Recommendations for follow-up action:

- Exert political pressure on Areva to adhere to international standards such as ICMM;
- EP assessment on capacity building needs to ratify, implement and reinforce international mining standards;
- Possibly further commissioning of detailed radiological measurements and data collection to determine the extent of actual contamination.